

## Message

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**Sent:** 2/13/2017 4:11:31 PM  
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**Subject:** USS Lead - Press

**East Chicago press clips****US EPA Region 5 – prepared by the Office of Public Affairs****February 13, 2017**

[http://www.nwitimes.com/news/opinion/editorial/editorial-holcomb-shows-true-humanity-in-disaster-declaration/article\\_4c9955e8-ef8b-55f3-8f4c-18e0f592ee79.html](http://www.nwitimes.com/news/opinion/editorial/editorial-holcomb-shows-true-humanity-in-disaster-declaration/article_4c9955e8-ef8b-55f3-8f4c-18e0f592ee79.html)

**EDITORIAL: Holcomb shows true humanity in disaster declaration**

- [The Times Editorial Board](#)
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- Feb 12, 2017 Updated 19 hrs ago

With one stroke of a pen, Republican Gov. Eric Holcomb showed a beleaguered corner of the state, far from his base of political support, that he cares.

Northwest Indiana should see it as a sign that, true to his word, Holcomb is a chief executive who thinks and acts with his own mind unbound by past politics.

On Thursday, Holcomb signed an executive order declaring a disaster emergency for East Chicago's USS Lead Superfund site.

That declaration allows for 30 days of enhanced state assistance for an estimated 100 residents who have yet to relocate from the lead-contaminated West Calumet Housing Complex.

As part of that plan, the state will aggressively seek \$2 million in federal funding to demolish the contaminated complex along with other funds to remediate lead.

The affected area stands as a clear and present public health danger and a reminder of what happens when government egregiously neglects the people it is supposed to serve.

Holcomb's disaster declaration seeks real relief while showing his office truly puts citizens' well being above politics.

His predecessor, former governor and now Vice President Mike Pence, declined to grant such a disaster designation as he was heading out the door toward Washington just a few short weeks ago.

When Holcomb campaigned to be our governor, he repeatedly told us his mindset and administration would be different from past governors.

He just proved it to Northwest Indiana in a most meaningful and effective way.

[http://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/lake/east-chicago-residents-fear-declaration-not-enough/article\\_155389ed-065f-51d5-a146-ccf3dbef42ee.html](http://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/lake/east-chicago-residents-fear-declaration-not-enough/article_155389ed-065f-51d5-a146-ccf3dbef42ee.html)

### **East Chicago residents fear declaration not enough**

- [Sarah Reese sarah.reese@nwi.com, 219-933-3351](mailto:sarah.reese@nwi.com)

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- Feb 10, 2017 Updated Feb 11, 2017 East Chicago residents reacted with reserved optimism Friday to Gov. Eric Holcomb's emergency declaration for the USS Lead Superfund site.

The governor's executive order is an important first step, they said, while questioning whether it will adequately address the most immediate needs of all the site's residents.

Thomas Frank, a member of the Community Strategy Group that two months ago demanded Mayor Anthony Copeland seek an emergency declaration, said the group is happy to see a commitment to addressing the needs of the remaining residents at the West Calumet Housing Complex.

However, the scope of the order doesn't fully address the needs of all residents in the Superfund site, including those living at more than 1,000 properties in zones 2 and 3 who are not being relocated, he said.

"Our desire was to get resources for the residents in their time of need and prioritize that through the declaration, as opposed to property of other entities," he said.

### **Cleanup ongoing**

The Environmental Protection Agency began cleaning up lead- and arsenic-contaminated soil in the Calumet neighborhood last fall. The agency shelved plans to excavate soil in zone 1 — which includes the housing complex and Carrie Gosch Elementary School — after the city ordered more than 1,000 residents to relocate from the complex. During several pilot studies, EPA found elevated lead levels in some residents' drinking water and indoor lead and arsenic levels that exceed outdoor levels.

EPA plans to provide cleaning for residents with elevated indoor dust levels, but funding for that service is not yet in place for one zone, officials said. The federal agency also recommended all of the city's approximately 28,000 residents use a certified water filter, because up to 90 percent of water customers could have lead service lines.

Four out of the nine specific measures in Holcomb's order focus assistance for housing complex residents and funding for demolition. The order also authorizes state agencies to coordinate an emergency response, petition EPA to provide grant money for the replacement of lead pipes, engage the new federal administration for greater assistance and provide more blood testing.

One urgent need not addressed was water filters, said Sam Henderson, a staff attorney for the Hoosier Environmental Council who has been participating in Community Strategy Group and Community Advisory Group meetings.

Filters are especially important for all Superfund residents, because they're at risk of exposure from various sources, Frank said.

Henderson, Frank and others also questioned whether the 30-day time frame set by the order is enough.

"It may be enough time to address some of the issues in West Calumet, but there is an ongoing emergency affecting several hundred homes that are still going to be occupied for many years into the future," Henderson said.

Sincerely,

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